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# HOLDEN, REED MEET WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADER TO DISCUSS HARRISBURG TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

HARRISBURG, PA (January 30, 2004) - Congressman Holden (PA-17th), senior Pennsylvanian on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; Congressman Jim Oberstar (MN-8), Ranking Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; Mayor Stephen R. Reed, Mayor of the City of Harrisburg, held a press briefing today to discuss pending legislation to reauthorize the six year federal surface transportation spending authorization, known as TEA-3.

The current authorization, TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century), expires February 29, 2004. It authorizes every federal dollar that goes to fund road and highway construction, public transit and intermodal transportation facilities.

Congressman, Holden stated, " I support a robust six-year TEA-21 reauthorization bill that creates good paying jobs for Pennsylvania, and as the Senior member of the Pennsylvania Delegation on the House Transportation Committee, I am working in a bipartisan way to fund the bill at \$375 billion over six years in order to create over a million jobs and rebuild our roads, bridges and mass transit. Reauthorizing TEA-03 is one of my top priorities this year."

"Greater investment in transportation infrastructure will bring efficiency and greater predictability for Pennsylvania travelers," continued Holden. "Predictable and regular travel times are good for businesses, consumers, and travelers at large. Efficiency achieved from reduced traffic congestion will have a direct effect on the ability to quickly move people, goods and services from place to place, positively impacting the economic development of our region."

Congressman Oberstar said, "Good transportation is the key to a community's economic prosperity. Over the next few weeks, Congress will be acting on a six-year, \$375 billion program for building and improving transportation infrastructure across the country."

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PAGE 2:

Oberstar continued, "At Rep. Holden's invitation, I have come to Central Pennsylvania to see firsthand the region's transportation needs. Rep. Holden has always been a strong advocate for his district the people who live here, and, when we return to Washington, I expect to work closely with him to help meet those needs."

"TEA-21 is a vital federal transportation program that very much affects our quality of life in Central Pennsylvania," said Mayor Reed. "Our highway and public transit systems and their capacity to handle ever increasing traffic loads are key elements of this region's current and future economic vitality. These funds are absolutely critical to the roadway and mass transportation improvements we need to do to remain competitive with other parts of the country."

According to a recent Urban Mobility Study by the Texas Transportation institute, the largest university-affiliated transportation research agency in the nation, the volume of roadways with congested travel has grown from 34 percent in 1982 to 58 percent in 2000.

In the same 18-year span, the time penalty for peak period travelers (time wasted sitting in traffic) has jumped from 16 hours per year in 1982 to over 62 hours per year in 2000.

This trend is devastating for Central Pennsylvania travelers. In addition to the high volume of commuter traffic in the region, the confluence of three major interstate highways (Routes 78,81 and 83) and the Pennsylvania turnpike make Central Pennsylvania a major artery for road freight shipping. The volume of truck traffic in the Harrisburg region is four times the national average for cities of comparable size and its impact on traffic congestion is devastating.

In addition to increased traveling efficiency, investment in transportation infrastructure will create new jobs, jobs that are desperately needed in this prolonged economic slump. Since January 2001, unemployment nationwide has increased from 4.2 percent to 6.1 percent, the highest level in nine years. Since January 2001, the number of unemployed people increased from 5.95 million people to 8.91 million, an increase of almost 3 million or more than 50 percent.

Over 40,000 jobs are created for every \$1 billion invested in transportation infrastructure and over \$8 billion have been spent in Pennsylvania under the current authorization.

Simply put, this reauthorization will strengthen the fabric of our Nation's infrastructure while creating jobs for millions of Americans.

-30-

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